

Sūrah ‘Abas

Central Theme and Relationship with the Preceding Sūrah

This *sūrah* forms a pair with Sūrah Nāzi‘āt, the previous *sūrah*. There is no basic difference between the central theme of both *sūrahs*. Both the style of the discourse and the manner of reasoning have very obvious similarity. The sequence of the topics covered in both is, however, different. It is this change that endows this *sūrah* with a new majesty and is the only thing which distinguishes it from the previous *sūrah*. By going through both these *sūrahs*, one can determine their similarities and dissimilarities.

At the end of the previous *sūrah*, the Prophet (sws) was assured by the words: *إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ مَّنْ يَخْشَاهَا* (٤٥ : ٧٩) (you are but a warner for people who fear it, (79:45)). This *sūrah* begins with this very subject: The Prophet (sws) is rebuked for wasting time on the arrogant leaders of the Quraysh who would find new excuses each day to not profess faith. They were the ones who out of arrogance would demand from the Prophet (sws) to turn out his poor companions from his presence if he wanted these leaders to sit with him. In the whole of this *sūrah*, these arrogant and haughty leaders are scolded severely. Although the Prophet (sws) is addressed, yet the direction of this stern address is towards these supercilious people.

Analysis of the Discourse

Verses (1-10): The Prophet (sws) is rebuked with reference to an incident: the haughty and conceited who are showing indifference to the message and reminders sounded by the Prophet (sws) and who are desirous that he should turn out his poor companions from his gatherings if he wants them to come to him should not be tolerated by the Prophet (sws). Their responsibility does not rest on him and therefore he by pampering them must not end up disregarding his obligation towards his companions who are ready to give up their lives for him. His real responsibility is to educate and instruct only those who come to him enthusiastically. He is not accountable for those who do not come to him and are desirous of being pampered. So he must not go after them at the cost of his own companions.

Verses (11-16): A mention of the grandeur and majesty of the Qur’ān: it

is a reminder revealed by God; so whoever wants, he should benefit from it. Those who do not value it will themselves face its consequences. It is an authoritative word of God which commands obedience; it is not the request of a supplicant. Therefore the Prophet (sws) should present it before people in a befitting manner. Those whom the Almighty has entrusted it with are noble and highly honoured people and the Prophet (sws) too is among them. He should not pamper these arrogant and haughty people to an extent which is against his status and as well as the honour of the message he is presenting.

Verses (17-23): An expression of sorrow at the state of the arrogant who are adamant on denying the Day of judgement. They are reminded of the various phases of their life: It is very sad and unfortunate if the human being who is created from the drop of a fluid and after passing through different phases reaches his grave regards re-creation to be an impossibility. Those who are not willing to profess belief after such manifest arguments will not be convinced by any other argument.

Verses (24-32): After focusing our attention to the phases of man's creation, a reference is made to the tremendous system of providence which the Almighty has set up for human beings as well as for animals. This shows that the Being who has made such an elaborate arrangement to nourish and nurture man will never leave people unaccountable for the blessings He has bestowed on them; one day, He will definitely call them to account. Only those people will succeed on that day who fulfilled their obligation towards these favours; those who were not able to do so will end up doomed and humiliated.

Verses (33-42): A portrayal of the Day of Judgement: people on that day will be so engrossed in their own affairs that they will become unconcerned with their near ones. A depiction of the joy of those who led their lives while being fearful of this day and of the misfortune and gloom of those who remained indifferent to this day and died in this state.

Text and Translation

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى (۱) أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى (۲) وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهَ يَرْكَبُ (۳) أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ
الذِّكْرَى (۴) أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْجَلَ (۵) فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى (۶) وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَرْكَبُ (۷) وَأَمَّا مَنْ
جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى (۸) وَهُوَ يَخْشَى (۹) فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى (۱۰) كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ (۱۱) فَمِنْ شَاءَ
ذَكَرَهُ (۱۲) فِي صُحُفٍ مُكَرَّمَةٍ (۱۳) مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُطَهَّرَةٍ (۱۴) بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ (۱۵) كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ

(١٦) قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ (١٧) مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ (١٨) مِنْ نُطْقَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَّرَهُ (١٩)
 ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ (٢٠) ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ (٢١) ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشَرَهُ (٢٢) كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ
 (٢٣) فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ (٢٤) أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا (٢٥) ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا
 (٢٦) فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا (٢٧) وَعَيْنًا وَقَضْبًا (٢٨) وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا (٢٩) وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا (٣٠)
 وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا (٣١) مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ (٣٢) فَإِذَا جَاءَتْ الصَّاعَةُ (٣٣) يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ
 الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ (٣٤) وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ (٣٥) وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ (٣٦) لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ (٣٧) وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُسْفِرَةٌ (٣٨) ضَاكِكَةٌ مُسْتَبْشِرَةٌ (٣٩) وَوُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 عَلِيَّا غَبْرَةٌ (٤٠) تَرَهَقُمَا قَتَرَةٌ (٤١) أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرَةُ الْفَجَرَةُ (٤٢)

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.

He frowned and turned away because there came to him a blind man. And what do you know that he might have sought to reform himself or might have heard the counsel and this counsel might have benefited him. (1-4)

He who shows indifference, you go after him even though you are not responsible if he does not reform himself; and he who comes to you with zeal and also fears God, you show indifference to him. (5-10)

Certainly not! This is but a reminder; so whoever wishes, can be reminded through it; in esteemed pages, exalted and untouched, in the custody of scribes, honourable and faithful. (11-16)

Woe to man! How ungrateful he is! From what was he created? From a drop of fluid. He created him and then measured out for him. Then eased out the path for him. He then gave him death; then He had him put in a grave. Then whenever He intends, He will raise him to life. (17-22)

Certainly not! He has still not complied with what his Lord had asked him. Thus man should reflect on his food that We poured forth water in abundance then cleaved the earth asunder, then produced in it grain, grapes, vegetables, olives, dates, dense orchards, fruits and herbage as means of sustenance for you and your cattle. (23-32)

So when the deafening blast comes! [Then that certain thing will manifest itself]. On that Day, man will flee from his brother, mother, father, his wife and his sons. Every one, on that Day, will be concerned with his own self. Many a face on that day will be bright, smiling and rejoicing, and many a face on that day will be gloomy and dark. These very disbelievers, these insolent. (33-42)

Explanation

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى (١) أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى (٢)¹

The subject of the verb عَبَسَ is not mentioned here; however, it becomes evident from the succeeding verses that the Prophet (sws) is its subject. All exegetes are unanimous that the verse refers to 'Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm (rta). He was a poor and blind Companion. It is mentioned in some narratives that one day the Prophet (sws) was talking to one of the leaders of the Quraysh or to a group of them; he was presenting the message of Islam before them and they must have been presenting their objections and doubts regarding Islam. During this conversation, 'Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm (rta) came over and without realizing the delicate nature of the meeting entered upon them. The Prophet (sws) did not approve of his untimely entry. This dislike on the part of the Prophet (sws) of course could not have been because he was poor or blind. Who could have cared more for the poor and the blind than the Prophet (sws) himself. The Prophet (sws) must have thought that because of 'Abdullāh's ill-timed arrival, he might lose an opportunity to tame these savage leaders; they would shy away and say that if such poor paupers are going to gather round the Prophet (sws), why should they sit with him and undermine their honour and status.

It should remain in consideration that one of the prominent objections of the leaders of the Quraysh on the Prophet (sws) was that his companions were the poverty-stricken and the destitute. They regarded this to be an argument against his prophethood. Moreover, another thing which could have been a cause of apprehension for the Prophet (sws) was that he feared that these leaders being inebriated with their superiority might show disrespect and disregard to a very dear companion of his which of course would cause even more distaste.

This incident which took place quite accidentally was used by the Almighty for the instruction and education of the Prophet (sws): He was told to make his companions who zealously wanted to reform themselves the real focus of attention; they were the ones who would enthusiastically come to his presence; he should not go after those who were indifferent to him and wanted the Prophet (sws) to pamper them.

It has been explained at a number of places in the previous *sūrahs* that in the initial stages the Prophet (sws) would diligently call the leadership of the Quraysh to the message of Islam. The reason for this was that he had been initially directed to address only them as is evident from the following verse: (٢٦:٢١) وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ (and warn your near

1. He frowned and turned away because there came to him a blind man.

family, (26:214)). Secondly, it was the Quraysh who were the leaders of all Arabia. It was hoped that if they embraced Islam, this would pave the way of its acceptance in all of Arabia. Consequently, for some time, the Prophet (sws) directed all his preaching efforts towards them and in spite of great arrogance and a humiliating behaviour shown by them, the Prophet (sws) persisted in preaching them. However, when their arrogance increased greatly and it became evident that these obdurate people would not reform themselves and in fact the time being wasted on them was at the cost of poor Muslims who had already embraced faith and for their education were more worthy of the Prophet's attention than these arrogant leaders, he was stopped from going after them. For this change in strategy, a very opportune chance was created by the incident of 'Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm (rta).

وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى (٣) أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى (٤)²

The previous verses just inform us of an incident without telling us who is discussed in this incident and what the purpose of mentioning it is. The word يُدْرِيكَ (you know) shows that this incident relates to the Prophet (sws) and that he is being informed that at times he goes so far in search for lost sheep that he becomes indifferent to the sheep of his own herd.

The absence of address in the initial verses do raise the question in the mind of the reader as to who the incident relates to; however, as the addressee has not been specified, the reader surmises that since he is not addressed, there is nothing to worry about. Consequently, a question regarding the addressee of this incident must have instantly arisen in the mind of the Prophet (sws); however, in the absence of any specific addressee there was no cause of worry for him. On the contrary, had the addressee been specified, this rebuke would have become very severe. The reason is that in this situation it would have become certain that the Prophet (sws) had been chided because he became coarse at the arrival of a blind person whereas, as is explained earlier with more details forthcoming, this was not the case.

In the current verses, the addressee is specified because here the incident which called for rebuke has been described: this rebuke was not because the Prophet (sws) was in anyway slack in an obligation; it was because he was over-concerned and over-zealous in discharging an obligation. I have explained at many places in this *tafsīr* that the errors committed by the prophets of God are never because of base desires; at times, they become

2. And what do you know that he might have sought to reform himself or might have heard the counsel and this counsel might have benefited him.

over enthusiastic in seeking the pleasure of God and exceed their bounds of duty in this regard. For example, when Moses (sws) was called by the Almighty to mount Tūr, He even fixed a specific date for it; however, Moses (sws) in his fervour could not wait for the specified time and reached earlier. When he was called to explain his behaviour, he replied that he had come early because of his zeal to please the Almighty. Obviously, such an omission is based on an enthusiasm which is very commendable. However, since the prophets of God are a standard for truth and justice, the Almighty checks them on such oversights also so that the standards they set must not in anyway be wavered.

The Almighty has checked the Prophet (sws) here on a similar lapse. Since the Prophet (sws) was expecting that once the leaders of the Quraysh would embrace faith the message of Islam would influence the whole of Arabia, he became deeply involved in his preaching endeavour. He even became indifferent to his own comfort as a result. He did not even realize what these leaders were doing to him and his mission. Such was the extent of his involvement that it was feared that he would be able to find little time for the education and instruction of the poor people who had embraced faith. The Qur'ān has affectionately chided him at a number of places and informed him that he had taken much more upon himself than the responsibility that was imposed upon him by the Almighty regarding the Quraysh. He should not fret over them. All he was required to do was to present the message of God which he had done and that no further pampering was required. It was in these circumstances that the incident of 'Abdullāh ibn Umm Maktūm (rta) took place because of which a decisive *sūrah* was revealed in this matter.

The words وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى (and what do you know that he might have sought to reform himself) point to the fact that the arrival of a blind man in a gathering of the Prophet (sws) dismayed him; this was because he perhaps thought that this would strike at the vanity of the leadership of Quraysh present, and they would shy away even though while pampering them he had become indifferent to a true student. So, the verse directs him to not go after instructing such unworthy people at the cost of a companion more worthy of his time.

It is also evident from these words that the real objective of the messengers of God is to spiritually purify their followers. Those who come to him for this purpose are the ones really worthy of his attention and affection. Others, who have no urge in them to reform themselves have no importance with regard to the objective of the preaching mission of the messengers however much important they may be otherwise.

Here, two qualities of a fervent person are mentioned: he is desirous of his inner-purification and he is one who benefits from being reminded.

Here, in fact, the characteristics of people who truly wanted to be instructed and reformed by the Prophet (sws) are mentioned. Generally, there were two types of people among them: one, people who had a question regarding their instruction and training and would come to the Prophet (sws) to seek guidance on it; two, people who had no such question in mind but would come to the Prophet (sws) to hear any words of guidance uttered by him or to benefit from the answer he may give to someone else. The words لَعَلَّهٗ يَرْكَبُ point to the first of these categories and the words يَذْكُرْ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرُ to the second. Both these attitudes are adopted by true students and the purpose of mentioning them is to let people know that anyone who wants to come to the gathering of the Prophet (sws) should come while keeping either of these two objectives in mind and it will be such people who would be worthy of his attention. As far as people who want to be pampered are concerned, they should sit at home and wait for their fate.

أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْنَى (٥) فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى (٦) وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَرْكَبُ (٧) وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى (٨) وَهُوَ يَخْشَى (٩) فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهَّى (١٠)³

These verses depict the real admonition which was sounded to the Prophet (sws) at that time. Only the God-fearing who have the urge to reform themselves are worthy of his attention. It is such people who are his real responsibility and he has no obligation to others.

The word تَصَدَّى is actually تَصَدَّدَ which is from the root صدد and it means “parallel” and “opposite”. The change in its morphological form is as per grammatical principles; examples of such a change can be seen in previous *sūrahs*. The implication is that the Prophet (sws) is anxious to convince people who show indifference, even though the Almighty has not made him accountable for them.

The verse وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَرْكَبُ says that the real responsibility of the Prophet (sws) is to warn people of the Hereafter and to communicate to them the true message of Islam; once he has done this, he has done what is required of him. He is not responsible to necessarily make them Muslims. This topic is discussed in the previous *sūrahs* in various styles and at every place its purpose is to clarify to the Prophet (sws) that he should not burden himself with more than what he has been made liable to. He should not put himself in stress because these unfortunate people

3. He who shows indifference, you go after him even though you are not responsible if he does not reform himself; and he who comes to you with zeal and also fears God, you show indifference to him.

do not want to reform themselves; he should just leave them to face the consequences.

The word يَسْعَى in the verse وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى means to do something with zeal and enthusiasm. It does not necessarily incorporate the meaning of “running around” in it. The verse: (٩: ٦٢) وَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ means “turn to the word of God with zeal and fervour.” In the verse under discussion, this word has come in this meaning. The implication is that they come to the Prophet (sws) with the fervour of a thirsty person approaching a fountain.

The verse وَأَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْجَى is in contrast to وَهُوَ يَخْشَى. On the one hand are people who are so engrossed in the pleasures and lures of this world that they are never bothered to think whether there is life after this life and whether one should prepare for it. On the other hand, there are people who fear meeting God in the Hereafter. It is this second category of people and not the first from which it can be expected that they will pay full heed to what the Prophet (sws) tells them. However, the Prophet (sws) is after the first trying to accomplish the impossible whereas he is not finding time for those who are ready to accept what he tells them.

The following things become evident from these verses:

Firstly, the admonition sounded in these verses which apparently seems directed at the Prophet (sws) is actually directed at the unworthy leaders of the Quraysh from whom there was no hope of the right attitude. Hence it became necessary that the Prophet (sws) ignore them and make the poor Muslims the real focus of his attention. For they were the ones who had embraced faith and were actually worthy of his preaching efforts.

Secondly, the Prophet (sws) has not been checked for being irresponsible in any manner; he has actually been checked for burdening himself with much more than the responsibility actually imposed on him by the Almighty. Besides other examples, one example of such an affectionate admonition can be seen in the following verse: لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ أَلَّا يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ (٣: ٢٦) (you will perhaps fret yourself that they are not becoming believers, (26:3)).

Thirdly, the Prophet (sw) has been guided that the real asset of Islam are the poor Muslims who are instilled with the fear of God and not the affluent whose hearts are devoid of the fear of God. Therefore, he should primarily direct his attention to them and not waste his time on those for whom there is no hope for any reformation.

Imām Hamīd al-Dīn Farāhī in his exegesis on Sūrah 'Abas has explained the reproach found in this address in a very lucid manner. He writes:

An example would perhaps serve to illustrate the point further.

Consider a very conscientious and vigilant shepherd who is looking for one of his well-bred sheep that has wandered off from the main herd; he sets out to find it and at every step he sees its footsteps; he is also able to hear its voice coming from some corner of the jungle; thinking that success is near, he wanders far off and becomes neglectful of his herd. When he returns, his master rebukes him for this negligence saying: "You have spent a lot of time in needlessly looking for a foolish goat; you should have left it to die in the wilderness or become prey to some hound; such a crazy animal does not deserve your attention." Who is rebuked here? The shepherd or the lost sheep? Likewise, in these verses, it seems that it is the Prophet (sws) who has been rebuked; however, actually, it is the Quraysh who have been rebuked though they have not been directly addressed. For the Prophet (sws), there are several aspects of affection and fondness concealed in this rebuke.⁴

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ (١١) فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكِّرْهُ (١٢)⁵

The negation implies that the Prophet (sws) should not go after such people who do not value his message. It is upon a person to be reminded by the Qur'ān, which is no more than a reminder. He who has no intention to be reminded by it should get ready to face the consequences it is informing people of. In other words, the responsibility of the Prophet (sws) is to only communicate this reminder to people; it is not his responsibility to force it down on them; he is merely required to warn them and not pamper them.

The antecedent of the pronoun in *إِنَّهَا* and *ذَكِّرْهُ* is *ذِكْرِي* which occurs in verse four. In the latter, the masculine pronoun has come with regard to the Qur'ān. Since *تَذْكِرَةٌ* and *ذِكْرِي* both refer to the Qur'ān, by bringing the masculine pronoun the objective is to refer to the real meaning. Examples of such usage can be seen in previous *sūrahs*.

It is evident from this discussion, as explained earlier, that if there is an element of rebuke in this address it is affection-oriented. The rebuke thus implies that he has burdened himself with much more responsibility than was actually assigned to him.

A part of the discourse is suppressed after *فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكِّرْهُ*. If it is revealed, the discourse would read something like this: "Whoever wants, he can benefit from this reminder and whoever wants, he can remain deaf to its

4. Farāhī, *Majmū'ah tafāsīr*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1998), 257.

5. Certainly not! This is but a reminder; so whoever wishes, can be reminded through it.

calls.” At another place, this fact is stated thus: *فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ* (then whoever wants can profess belief and whoever wants can profess disbelief, (18:29)).

فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ (١٣) مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ (١٤) بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ (١٥) كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ (١٦)⁶

This is a further explanation of the above-mentioned directive given to the Prophet (sws) to disregard and ignore the arrogant leadership of the Quraysh. The implication is that just as it is not befitting for him to accede to these disbelievers, similarly, what he is presenting before them is not something which should be presented to them by begging and beseeching them; it is in fact a very exalted, lofty and honourable thing. It is not like some defective merchandise so that the Prophet (sws) has to worry about selling it in whatever way possible and go as far as to coax and lure buyers into buying it. It is in fact a pearl and ruby from among the treasures of the Almighty which he is dispensing free of cost. If these people are not valuing it, they are not harming the Prophet (sws) in any way; they are only taking their selves to eternal doom.

The words *فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ* express the exaltedness and majesty of the discourse. Here the inchoative (*mubtadā*) is suppressed; the sentence actually is: *هُوَ فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ*. When more adjectives of a noun are to be mentioned subsequently, it is customary in Arabic to suppress the inchoative.

The word *صَحِيفَةً* refers to a written page. When used in the plural form (*صُحُف*), it, at times, refers to a book. Here, it refers to the guarded tablet and the adjective *مُكَرَّمَةٍ* shows that it is a powerful and priceless treasure which is being guarded by the angels of God with great diligence. This is a reference to the fact that neither is it accessible to everyone nor everyone has the permission to access it or take something from it; it is God who bestows it upon those He wants to and He has blessed the Prophet (sws) from this treasure and he should only present it before those who are worthy of it. He should not cast pearls before a swine. The Gospel has very effectively mentioned this teaching and I have referred to it earlier at some place in this *tafsīr*.

The adjectives *مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ* also occur to explain *مُكَرَّمَةٍ*. The former refers to exaltedness both in meaning and status and at another place is explained thus: *وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِّ حَكِيمٌ* (٤:٤٣) (it is with us in the original book, exalted and full of wisdom, (43:4)).

The purpose of the adjective *مُطَهَّرَةٍ* is to bring to light the fact that the

6. In esteemed pages, exalted and untouched, in the custody of scribes, honourable and faithful.

Qur'ān is safe and secure from the incursions of devils and evil spirits. For example, it is said: (٥٦: ٧٨-٧٩) *فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ* (it is in a secure book which is only accessible to the pure, (56:78-79)).

The words *سَفَرَةٌ كِرَامٍ بَارَّةٍ* delineate the characteristics of scribes in whose custody this secure book has been given by God. What is stated negatively in 56:79 quoted above is stated here positively. What is said overall can be stated thus: Evil spirits and devils have no access to this secure Book; on the contrary, it is in the custody of angels who are pure, faithful and highly respected.

The word *سَفَرَةٌ* is a plural of *سَافِرٌ* and means “a reader” and “a scribe”. It connotes both reading and writing. If one reflects on its etymology, one comes to the conclusion that it was originally meant for writing and later its meaning was extended to include reading and stating something.

The word *كِرَامٍ* refers to their high status and noble character; they are such exalted and honourable beings that there is no possibility of any dishonesty from them. Neither can they take out anything from it nor can they allow the jinn and the devils to have access to it.

The word *بَارَّةٍ* is a plural of *بَارٌّ*. It means “obedient, faithful and responsible”. This adjective further highlights their quality of being trustworthy. At one place, it is said: (٢٦: ١٩٣) *نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ* (this word has been brought down by the faithful Spirit, (26:193)). At another place, it is further explained thus:

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ (٨١: ١٩-٢١)

This is the word brought by a noble messenger; he is endued with great power and held in honour before the Lord of the throne; he is obeyed and is very trustworthy. (81:19-21)

The purpose of mentioning these attributes of the Qur'ān and of its custodians is, as mentioned earlier, to direct the attention of the Prophet (sws) to the fact that the Qur'ān should not be presented to people by begging and imploring them; it should be presented with honour and dignity, which is the very hallmark of the Book itself. Similarly, just as the Almighty has entrusted it to honourable and noble angels, the Prophet (sws) and his Companions (rta) too should uphold this honour and dignity in their preaching.

Also evident from this is the fact that the archangel whom the Almighty has selected for the deliverance of revelation and the scribes who are entrusted with its writing all have a lofty character and carry out their responsibilities with great honesty and integrity. In other words, only those people in this earth are selected to transmit and deliver this

word of God who have the same qualities and attributes which are found in the angels to carry out this service in the heavens.

قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ⁷(١٧)

Though a general word *الْإِنْسَانُ* (man) is used here, the address is directed at the arrogant leadership of the Quraysh mentioned in the earlier verses. I have explained at various instances of this *tafsīr* that at times the discourse is addressed to a certain person or a group; however, this address is couched in general words and they are not directly addressed. Such an address expresses the disgust of the speaker. The verse under discussion is an example of such an address. The implication is: “this man is a strange creature; woe to him on his ungratefulness; such is the state of his impudence and foolishness that he desires that if the word of God be recited out to him it should be recited out in a submissive and subservient manner.” The style *مَا أَكْفَرَهُ* both reflects wonder and disgust.

مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ (١٨) مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَرَهُ (١٩) ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ (٢٠) ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ (٢١) ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشَرَهُ⁸(٢٢)

In these verses, the pride and vanity of these people is condemned. The method adopted is to allude in small sentences to the creation of man, the substance from which he is created, the stages of his creation, the sources of life and its objective, death, grave and being raised up again. In this manner, the transience of their pride is made evident to them and while reflecting on their life they are also able to see the reward and punishment they are being informed of by the Qur'ān.

The question posed by the words *مِنْ أَيِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ* is also to express humiliation and to direct attention to life after death. These arrogant people haughtily believed that just as they have been blessed with respect and leadership, if ever there is to be a Day of Judgement, there too they would be blessed with a similar status. It is because of this notion that the warning sounded by the Prophet (sws) would weigh down heavily upon them. They would say that the Prophet (sws) is warning them of being thrown into Hell and giving glad tidings to the poor paupers of being blessed with Paradise – paupers who would serve them and who they

7. Woe to man! How ungrateful he is!

8. From what was he created? From a drop of fluid. He created him and then measured out for him. Then eased out the path for him. He then gave him death; then He had him put in a grave. Then whenever He intends, He will raise him to life.

never even considered worthy enough to sit in their company. The Qur'ān has attacked this notion of theirs in the following words:

فَمَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قَبْلَكَ مُهْطِعِينَ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ أَيُّضَمُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ
مَنْهُمْ أَنْ يُدْخَلَ جَنَّةَ نَعِيمٍ كَلَّا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِمَّا يَعْلَمُونَ (٣٩-٣٦: ٧٠)

Then what is the matter with these disbelievers that they rush madly at you in multitudes from right and left? Does each man among them expect to enter the garden of bliss. By no means! We have created them out of what they know. (70:36-39)

Readers may take a look at the *tafsīr* of these verses in *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*. The implication is that it is not befitting for creatures born from a dirty (*najis*) fluid to boast of their purity and superiority and thereby regard themselves to be entitled to Paradise.

Similarly, the Qur'ān at various places has cited the creation and phases of man's creation to substantiate the fact that the God who can create a human being from a trivial drop of liquid can easily re-create him after he dies. This topic is mentioned in the Qur'ān in various styles. I will content myself in citing the following verses from Sūrah Mu'minūn:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ثُمَّ
خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ
لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ
ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ (١٦-١٢: ٢٣)

And We first created man from an essence of clay: then placed him in the form of a drop of water in a secure place. Then We made the drop into a clot of blood, and then made the clot a lump of flesh. This We fashioned into bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then gave it an entirely new form. Blessed be God, the noblest of creators. Then after this you shall surely die and be restored to life on the Day of Judgement. (23:12-16)

Consider next the expression *مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ*. Since the answer posed in the previous verse "from what has he been created" was absolutely evident and none could refute it, the Qur'ān has itself answered the question that man was created from a drop of water. At another place in the Qur'ān (77:20), this water is called *مِهْنٍ* (insignificant and despicable). In other words, it is neither a rare thing nor invaluable as regards its price. So

how is it befitting for man who has been created with such an impure drop of fluid to boast and brag.

After a mention of the inconsequential nature of the drop from which man has been created, the next part of the verse *حَلَقَهُ فَقَدَرَهُ* refers to the measuring out, planning and easing out evident in the creation of man and in the various stages of his life. Evident from his creation and these stages of life is the fact that grandeur and majesty shown by providence in fashioning a drop of fluid into a complete human being cannot be without a meaning and purpose. In fact, it is essential that a day come wherein it judges him, evaluates the good and evil done by him and then select those who conform to its standards and cast those into fire who fall below these standards.

The word *فَقَدَرَهُ* refers to the gradual stages and phases of man's life. Just as while referring to the waxing and waning of the moon the Qur'ān has said: *وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَا مَنَازِلَ* (We have ordained phases for the moon, (36:39)), in a similar manner, this word directs our attention to the various stages of life through which he gradually passes from childhood to youth to old age. The above quoted verses of Sūrah Mu'minūn also refer to this subject and here in the succeeding verses some of its aspects are delineated. It is obvious that this gradual progress bears evidence to the power and wisdom of God and the thoroughness present in the creation of man. In turn, this power and thoroughness bear witness to the fact that man is not a purposeless creation; he has been created for a great purpose which self-evidently entails that he be raised to life once again after death, called to account and then be rewarded or punished accordingly. Simultaneously, the power of God evident in the creation of man bears indisputable evidence that creating him again after death is not at all something impossible.

While explaining the verse *ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ* our exegetes generally say that it refers to the easing out which providence has ordained in the body of the mother and her child for delivery and which comes to the help of both exactly at the time it is needed. This is quite true. Undoubtedly, if this thing does not happen from providence at the right time there is nothing to substitute it; in fact, there is a possibility that both the child and the mother die of suffocation. However, in my opinion, there is no need to narrow down the scope of easing out to such an extent. Just as the child in its mother's womb grows and is nourished because of the planning and ease provided by providence, in a similar manner it goes through the ups and downs of life from its birth to death because of the ease and guidance provided by providence. It is this ease and facility provided by God because of which the breasts of a mother become laden with milk for the

nourishment of a child after she gives birth to it and the child itself is instinctively guided to suck them. Similarly, during youth also while undertaking various tasks and achieving success in various aspects of life he uses the limbs and means blessed by God and benefits from the intellect and guidance bestowed upon him by the Almighty. In Sūrah A'ḷā this aspect of the Almighty's grandeur is mentioned thus: **الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ** (۸۷: ۲-۳) (Who made a sketch and then perfected it, and Who set their destinies and then gave guidance, (87:2-3)).

Similar is the situation of the soul and the morals ordained in it. The Qur'ān says:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ
دَسَّاهَا (۹۱: ۷-۱۰)

And bears witness the soul and the perfection given to it; then inspired it with its evil and its good that he succeeded who purified it and he failed who corrupted it. (91:7-10))

In short, whether it is the spiritual aspect of life or material, the Almighty eased out the way for man. If he treads this path, he will never stumble; however, by wrongly using his free will when he adopts the wrong path, he is doomed.

The expression **ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ** is a reference to the last phase of life. A time comes when the Almighty gives him death and has him put in a grave. Death is the most certain reality for a living being once he comes in this world. Such are the laws of this world in which providence has enchained man that no one can escape death. The Almighty's shot always hits the bull's eye.

أَقْبَرَهُ means "to put someone in the grave or to bury him". Found in this word is a subtle reference to the fact that death does not destroy a person; he is given in the custody of the earth by providence. What is given in custody has to be returned one day. Consequently, when the time comes, the Almighty will take back what was consigned to the earth's custody.

In the expression **ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشَرَهُ** the word **أَنْشَرَهُ** means "to open, to scatter, to disperse and to raise up anew". The implication is that whenever the Almighty wants, He will raise up man. This He will do with the greatest of ease. When in the womb of a mother He was able to fashion out a human being from a drop of water without the slightest of bother, how can it be difficult for Him to retrieve human beings buried in the earth.

كَلَّا لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ (٢٣)⁹

This verse is in parallel to the above quoted verse: قُتِلَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ (Woe to man! How ungrateful he is!). It has been explained that this verse expresses wonder at the obduracy of these obdurate people and then the Day of Judgement is corroborated through man's existence – the Day which he was regarding as an impossibility. Similarly, in the verse under discussion, these people are rebuked at their idiocy and then the Day of Judgement is corroborated on the basis of the great system of providence which is found around man and which by its very existence bears witness to the fact that the Almighty who has blessed man with such favours will not leave him unaccountable; a day of accountability is certain to come for him.

Evident from the style of the expression لَمَّا يَقْضِ مَا أَمَرَهُ (he has still not complied with what his Lord had asked him) is that as far as teaching and communicating the reasons which entail the coming of such a day is concerned, it has been done in the most ultimate manner; however, these obstinate people are still adamant on their stance. Even now they are indifferent to the Day for whose preparation they are being asked.

Included in the words مَا أَمَرَهُ (what his Lord had asked him) are all the directives which are among self-evident realities of human nature and also the directives which the Almighty has revealed through His messengers for the guidance of people. I have already explained under: فَاتَّبِعْنِ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ (٢: ٢٢٢) (go to them from where God has enjoined you, (2:222)) how self-evident realities of human nature must be regarded as directives of God.

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ (٢٤)¹⁰

The implication is that if they have not been able to understand the argument cited before them, then there are many other arguments also which substantiate the Day of Judgement. Man should only reflect on his food on which his life depends: he should look how the Almighty creates it and then with great abundance and variety while catering for multifarious needs makes it available in countless forms. In other words, if keeping aside obstinacy, man sincerely reflects on this state of affairs he will easily understand that re-creating him after death is not the least difficult for the Almighty. The very rain which is a means of his subsistence practically demonstrates this fact. He will also be able to

9. Certainly not! He has still not complied with what his Lord had asked him.

10. Thus man should reflect on his food.

understand that this tremendous system of providence and sustenance entails that man be held accountable before God one day. Such a day is bound to come when he will be asked if he fulfilled his obligation towards the favours bestowed upon him by the Almighty. It is but natural that every favour entail responsibility.

أَنَا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا (٢٥) ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا (٢٦)¹¹

The Qur'ān has not only asked man to reflect on his food, it has also specified the course of this reflection. It is a consequence of God's power and mercy that rain is sent down in abundance and then in order to drench the earth its pores are opened. Neither is anyone else in the position to send down rain from the skies nor to open the pores of the earth whereas on these two factors depends all the benefits and services provided by the earth. This topic is discussed thus in Sūrah Anbiyā': أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا (٣٠:٢١) (that the heavens and the earth were but one solid mass which We tore asunder, (21:30)).

If one deliberates on the nature of man's creation mentioned in the above paragraph, one will realize the similarity between both arguments. There the argument began with the substantiation of the Day of Judgement and then after a mention of providence reached its culmination with the mention of accountability and reward and punishment. Here too, as will become evident from subsequent verses, the sequence of premises in the argument presented is the same. First, the mention of a comprehensive issue was instrumental in initiating the possibility of the Day of Judgement. After that, various signs of providence are brought into attention and then accountability and reward and punishment are presented as an obvious outcome to all this.

فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا (٢٧) وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا (٢٨) وَزَيْتُونًا وَنَخْلًا (٢٩) وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا (٣٠) وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا (٣١)¹²

Some very prominent blessings of the Almighty for the inhabitants of the earth produced as a result of interaction between the rain and the earth are referred to here. These things are ones which the foremost addressees of the Qur'ān were well aware of and which occupy primary importance in nourishing the needs of man.

Firstly, things which are attached or are born spread out on the earth

11. That We poured forth water in abundance then cleaved the earth asunder.

12. Then produced in it grain, grapes, vegetables, olives, dates, dense orchards, fruits and herbage as means of sustenance for you and your cattle.

and whose observation does not require that the sight be lifted from the earth are referred to. For example grain, grapes and vegetables. Grain is the most important thing for nourishment; all other things come under it and that is why it is mentioned the foremost. After grain, the next most important thing needed for human nourishment and growth is fruit and the king of all fruits is grapes; it is thus mentioned as an example of a fruit. After this, vegetables which are spread on the earth are mentioned and with grain are used as curry, some in raw form and some in cooked form. Although the word قَضْبُ is mostly used for vegetables which are eaten raw and are regarded as ready-to-eat, however other vegetables are also connoted by this word.

After this, certain other blessings are mentioned which are obtained from the trees which extend into the sky and which need that the sight be lifted for their observation. As an example, dates and olives are mentioned. The importance olive has in producing oil is well-known. The Qur'ān mentions its nourishing ability and Sūrah Nūr mentions a parable which describes lamps which are lit up by this oil.

After this, dates are mentioned. To the Arabs dates were an amalgam of multifarious benefits and blessings. For them, they were dry-fruits which are rich in nutritional value and very lucrative to stock. Moreover, they would also make a very tasty juice from it.

After a mention of things of specific importance, general orchards are mentioned by the words حَدَائِقُ غُلْبًا. The word حَدِيقَةٌ refers to an enclosed orchard. The word غُلْبٌ is a plural of أَغْلَبَ and means someone having a thick neck. When this word is used for an orchard the purpose is to point to the lushness of the trees. If an orchard is luxuriant, the expanse of the trees would necessarily increase and their upper portions would overlap.

In the expression وَأَبَّاءُ فَاكِهَةٍ the general is made even more general so that the sphere of favours of the Almighty for man is extended to animals as well which directly or indirectly are of use to him.

Earlier, only specific fruits are mentioned by name and here by mentioning the word فَاكِهَةٍ all fruits are referred to whether they are found in Arabia or in other countries whether they are of high pedigree or ordinary and whether they are reserved for birds or for animals.

Moreover, earlier only those favours are mentioned which man is blessed with whereas besides him there are four-legged beasts also on which man is not only dependent but also need looking after like man; however, nothing is mentioned for them specially. Here that lack of mention has been made up for by mentioning the word أَبَّاءُ.

The word أَبَّاءُ means vegetation and lush grass. For consumption of the four-legged beasts is the husk also which is separated from the grain;

however, it is something very ordinary; here what needs to be mentioned is something of the same value and importance as fruits are for man. Fresh lush green grass is made widely available to animals and it is also a substitute for them for the fruits and vegetables which man consumes.

Imām Hamīd al-Dīn Farāhī has deeply researched into the meaning of أَبٌ in his *tafsīr* of Sūrah ‘Abas and proven that it is a very common Arabic word and that it is not correct that Abū Bakr (rta) or ‘Umar (rta) did not know the meaning of this word, as is mentioned in certain narratives. This research is very thorough and if anyone has any doubts about this word, he can look up his *tafsīr*.¹³

¹⁴ مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ (٣٢)

The fact that all these things are beneficial to man is very obvious and there is also no doubt that all these favours are a manifestation of God’s graciousness to man; he should therefore think that do not these favours impose a responsibility on him. This last premise though not mentioned in words is evident from the context. This is because it is discussed in the previous verses that these stubborn and conceited people are not showing ingratitude to God because His rights are not evident to them or because they do not realize what their responsibilities are; the fact of the matter is that because of their own arrogance and haughtiness they deliberately do not want to hear or accept anything which is against their desires.

¹⁵ فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاخَّةُ (٣٣)

The word صَّاخَّةٌ means “a deafening blast or roar”. Just as in Sūrah Nāzi‘āt the word used is طَامَّةٌ, the word صَّاخَّةٌ is used in this *sūrah* to convey the same meaning. These words actually point to the fact that the very first shout of the trumpet will be so horrifying that it will deafen the ears.

The answer to the conditional clause that begins with إِذَا (when) is suppressed because it is obvious from the context, as is explained in verses 30-35 of Sūrah Nāzi‘āt. The implication is that today these people are receiving the warning of the Prophet (sws) with deaf ears but what will they do when the caller deputed by the Almighty will call from such a nearby place that his voice will make them deaf.

13. Farāhī, *Majmū‘ah tafāsīr*, 269-270.

14. As means of sustenance for you and your cattle.

15. So when the deafening blast comes!

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ (٣٤) وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ (٣٥) وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ (٣٦) لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ
يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ (٣٧)¹⁶

These verses depict the horror of that day. It must be kept in mind that the words: *يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ* do not form an answer to the conditional clause mentioned in the previous verse. Had they constituted the answer, linguistic principles dictate that its style should have been different. The answer is suppressed as is explained under the relevant verses of Sūrah Nāzi'āt; however, these words do subtly indicate the suppressed answer. In other words, today these people have shut their ears to the warnings sounded to them by the Prophet (sws) and the real reason for this is that their pride in the strength and authority of their family and tribe has blinded them; they reckon that no one can displace or destroy them; however, the day heralded by this deafening roar will be so horrifying that everyone will forget about his surroundings and will only think of his own self. Neither a brother will hear the imploring of his brother nor a son will care for the pleadings of his parents and nor will anyone have the courage to share the hardships faced by his wife and sons. Everyone will be so concerned about his own self on that day that the thought of others will not even cross his mind even though that person may be a very close relative of his.

This topic is discussed in Sūrah Ma'ārij in the following words:

وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا يُبْصَرُونَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِ لَوْ يَفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍ بَنِيهِ
وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَأَخِيهِ وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُؤْوِيهِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يُنْجِيهِ (٧٠: ١-١٤)

On that day, no sincere friend shall inquire after his friend [though] they shall be shown to one another. The sinner will long to redeem himself from the torment of that Day by offering his sons, his wife, his brother, his family who used to give him shelter and all the people of the earth as ransom and then save himself from it. (70:1-14)

The only difference between these two sets of verses is that in the one under discussion the sequence of relatives mentioned is from distant to near and in this one it is vice versa.

16. On that Day, man will flee from his brother, mother, father, his wife and his sons. Every one on the Day will be concerned with his own self.

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ (٣٨) ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ (٣٩) وَوُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ (٤٠)
تَرَاهُهَا قَاسٍ (٤١) أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرَةُ الْفَجَرَةُ (٤٢)¹⁷

Here, at the end, the difference between the believers and disbelievers which will be evident from their faces is briefly indicated so that from this observable difference one can have an idea of their inner-selves. This of course will reflect the hopes and grit with which the hearts of the believers will be replete and also reflect what will be going on in the hearts of the disbelievers.

The word مُّسْفِرَةٌ means “shining” and “bright”. This meaning emanates from the idiom أَسْفَرَ الصُّبْحُ. This word indicates the very first radiance of joy which will appear on the faces of the dwellers of Paradise.

The word ضَاحِكَةٌ also denotes joy and happiness.

The word مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ denotes freshness.

The state of the disbelievers is depicted by the words: وَوُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ: their faces will be dark and gloomy because they would have lost all hope.

The words أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرَةُ الْفَجَرَةُ at the end actually briefly refer to the charge-sheet of these criminals: they will reach this state because in the previous world they persisted to show ingratitude to God and remained arrogant and disobedient to Him.

By the grace of God, the *tafsīr* of this *sūrah* comes to an end. وَهُوَ الْمُوقِّعُ لِلصَّوَابِ (only He guides to what is right).

Rahmānabād,

21st May, 1979 AD

23rd Jumādī al-Thānī, 1399 AH

17. Many a face on that day will be bright, smiling and rejoicing, and many a face on that day will be gloomy and dark. These very disbelievers, these insolent.